

S F. R.

31 May 1973

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Contact with Mr. Robert Blum

STATINTL

1. I received a telephone call from Mr. Robert Blum of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff on 30 May 1973. He said that he had hoped to arrange a meeting with [redacted] and me, but, since [redacted] was preoccupied with other matters, he wondered if the two of us could get together for lunch.

STATINTL

2. This was the second time that Mr. Blum had tried to meet with me. My name came to his attention earlier in the year when Mary Walton Livingston, an archivist with the Office of Presidential Libraries, had mentioned to him that I had assisted in preparing sterilized copies of certain OSS documents furnished the Committee. Mr. Blum asked Mrs. Livingston to contact me and see whether I could come to his office to discuss the declassification of OSS records in general, and also trips which I was considering making to the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman Libraries. Mrs. Livingston informed me that Mr. Blum was anxious to talk to "a real expert on OSS." I quickly assured her that I was hardly an expert, and that, moreover, the Agency had special channels for Congressional liaison. If Mr. Blum still wished to talk with me and made the arrangements through [redacted] I would be pleased to meet with him.

STATINTL

3. When I received the 30 May telephone call, my instinct was to keep Mr. Blum at arm's length. I reiterated that I claimed no particular expertise with respect to OSS records. He responded that he was more interested in any plans that the Agency might have for declassifying OSS materials. Specifically, he cited the DCI's letter to Senator Fulbright, which had mentioned a pilot project to declassify OSS documents. I responded that this was probably in reference to the three contract employees who had been detailed to the National Archives to review the R&A Branch records deposited there. I informed him that some thought had been given to the need

for reviewing the OSS materials still in the custody of the Agency, and that proposals had been made for their systematic review, but that no decision had been reached as yet. I also advised Mr. Blum that batches of OSS documents had been forwarded to the Agency by the Roosevelt and Truman Libraries, and that, following a review, many of these had been declassified.

4. Mr. Blum reacted rather strongly when I stated that the Agency's current declassification program was limited to responding to ad hoc requests from private citizens or other Government agencies. Mr. Blum said that it was his understanding that the CIA would not accept requests for the declassification and release of documents. I assured him that this was not the case. It was true that the Agency was very cautious in releasing materials, but this was necessary because premature disclosure could jeopardize sensitive operations, cause a deterioration in our relations with other countries, or even result in agents losing their lives. I indicated that the Agency's attitude toward the release of documents was probably more liberal than it had been a few months ago, and that at least one denial (I did not specify which one) was being reconsidered. Mr. Blum asked whether the change in Agency leadership had resulted in a liberalization of release policies, and I replied that this may have been a factor.

5. Mr. Blum then brought up the matter of NIEs. He said that his Committee had requested one (NIE No. 5??) and had been refused. I disclaimed any authority to speak on the subject. I knew that at one time NIEs were considered to fall under the protection of executive privilege, but it was quite possible that this position had been abandoned.

6. Mr. Blum persisted in wanting to meet with me. I advised him that my part of the Agency was currently undergoing a reorganization. It would be some time before any firm decisions regarding a declassification program would be reached--at least two weeks, I opined. He said that he would probably call me again later.

7. Mr. Blum never specified why he was so interested in Agency plans to declassify OSS records. I assume that he hopes to gain access to them in connection with his doctoral dissertation. In the course of our conversation, I told him that any declassified

documents would probably be transferred to the National Archives and would be available to researchers in that fashion. I also stated that it was unlikely that the Agency could afford the man-power required to sterilize documents; the documents would either be declassified in their entirety, or they would remain classified.

8. If the Agency does decide to embark upon a program to review for declassification all of the OSS records, I am perfectly willing to describe the program to Mr. Blum in general, nonspecific terms. It would probably be beneficial from a public relations standpoint. I would prefer, however, that this be done by a member of the OLC--or at least in the presence of someone from that staff.

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Distribution:
Orig - SAIC

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